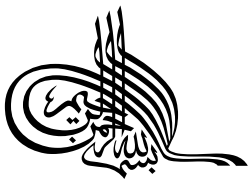

Epistle in Refutation of al-Albānī [1]

Tawassul & the Hadīth of the Man in Need

Shaykh `Abdullāh ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddīq al-Ghumārī

Translation and Footnotes by Muhammad William Charles

With Additional Annotation by Shaykh Abul Hasan

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By [the grace of] the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate, [I begin].

All praise is Allāh's, the Lord of the Worlds. The last word will be for those who fear Allāh. Enmity is only for those who transgress. I seek blessings and peace on our master, Muhammad ﷺ, and on his noble house. May Allāh be pleased with his Companions and their Followers.

To get to the point, I declare that Shaykh al-Albānī, may Allāh forgive him, is a man who is motivated by ulterior purposes and desire. If he sees a Hadīth [2] or a report (*āthar* [3]) that does not accord with his persuasion he straight away proceeds to foist it off as weak (*da`īf*). By using guile and deception he prevails upon his readers that he is right; whereas, he is wrong. Rather, he is a sinner and a hoodwinker. By such duplicity he has succeeded in misguiding his followers who trust him and think that he is right. One of those who has been deceived by him is Hamdī al-Salafī who edited *al-mu`jam al-kabīr* [4]. He had the impudence to declare a rigorously authentic Hadīth weak (*da`īf*) because it did not go along with his sectarian dogmas just as it did not concur with the persuasion of his teacher [Shaykh]. The proof of that is that what he says about the Hadīths being weak is just what his Shaykh says.

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[1] Abul Hasan [AH]: The original title page of this work as written in the handwriting of the famous *muhaddith* of Morocco himself can be viewed here: (**http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-1.jpg**)

[2] *Hadīth* refers to a saying reported from the Prophet of Islām ﷺ, or a report about his habit or deed or character or appearance.

[3] *Athar* here refers to a report from a Companion; that is, one who lived to see the Prophet ﷺ, or from a Follower; that is, one who lived to see a Companion even if he didn't hear anything from him.

[4] A famous collection of Hadīth compiled by al-Tabarānī.

This being the case, I wished to present the real truth of the matter and to expose the falsity of the claims of both the deceiver [al-Albānī] and the deceived [Hamdī al-Salafī].

I declare that I depend on none but Allāh; He is my support and to Him do I consign myself.

Al-Tabarānī reported in his *al-mu`jam al-kabīr*: [5]

From the route of Ibn Wahb from Shabīb from Rawh ibn al-Qāsim from Abū Ja`far al-Khatamī al-Madanī from Abū Umāma ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf from `Uthmān ibn Hunayf:

> *A man was going to `Uthmān ibn `Affān* [6] *trying to get something done for himself. However, `Uthmān didn't pay any attention to him, nor did he look after his need. That man went to `Uthmān ibn Hunayf and complained about that to him. `Uthmān ibn Hunayf said to him, "Go and perform ablution (wudū), then go to the mosque and pray two cycles (raqa`atayn) of prayer, then say: 'O Allāh, I ask You and I approach You through your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muhammad, I approach my Lord through you that my need be fulfilled,' then mention your need. Thereafter come to me that I might go with you."*
>
> *Then the man went away and did what he was told. After that he went to the door of `Uthmān ibn `Affān; whereupon the doorkeeper took him by the hand and ushered him into `Uthmān ibn `Affān who sat him down beside him on his mat and said to him, "What can I do for you?" He told him what he needed and `Uthmān had that done for him and then he said to him, "I didn't remember your problem until now. Whenever you need anything come to me." Thereupon the man left him and went to `Uthmān ibn Hunayf and said, "May Allāh bless you, `Uthmān wouldn't look after me, nor even pay attention to me until you spoke to him about me." `Uthmān ibn Hunayf replied, "I swear by Allāh that I didn't speak to him.*
>
> *Actually, I saw a blind man come to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and complain to him about losing his sight. The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Wouldn't you rather show patience?" He replied, "O Messenger of Allāh, I don't have a guide and the matter has become an ordeal for me." The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Go and make ablution (wudū), then pray two cycles (raqa`atayn) of prayer, then make this supplication (du'ā). I swear by Allāh, we hadn't gone away, nor had we remained a long time in talk when the man returned as if he had never suffered any affliction.*

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[5] AH: *al-mu`jam al-kabīr* (9/17)

[6] `Uthmān ibn `Affān was the third Caliph (*khalīfa*) of Islām. He succeeded `Umar in the year 23 h./643 a.d., and was slain by conspirators on the 18th of Dhul Hijjah, 35 h. (June 17th, 656 a.d.), aged eighty-two, and having reigned twelve years. The Prophet ﷺ married him to his daughter Ruqayyah, and when she died he married him to his second daughter Umm Kulthūm. For that reason `Uthmān is known fondly amongst the Muslims as Dhul Nūrayn (the Holder of the Two Lights).

Al-Tabarānī declared this report to be rigorously authentic [7] (*sahīh*); whereas, Hamdī al-Salafī contradicted him saying:

> *There is no doubt about the authenticity of that part of the Hadīth [concerning the story of the blind man] [8]; the doubt concerns the [first part of] the story [concerning `Uthmān ibn Hunayf's instructions to the man who sought the help of `Uthmān ibn 'Affan] which heretics (mubtadi`a) adduce attempting to prove the legitimacy of their heretical practice of calling the Prophet ﷺ for his intercession. [That part of the story is in doubt for the reasons which we will explain.]*
>
> *Firstly, as al-Tabarānī mentioned, Shabīb [who is one of the narrators mentioned in the report's chain of narration (sanad) is alone in reporting this Hadīth.*
>
> *Then, Shabīb's narrations are not bad (la ba'sa bihī) on two conditions: first, that his son Ahmad be the one who narrates from him; second, that Shabīb's narration be from Yūnus ibn Yazīd. However, in the present case, Shabīb's narration is reported by [three persons]: Ibn Wahb, and Shabīb's two sons Ismā`īl and Ahmad.*
>
> *As for Ibn Wahb, extremely reliable narrators (al-thiqa) criticized Ibn Wahb's narrations from Shabīb, as they criticized Shabīb himself. And as for Shabīb's son, Isma`īl, he is unknown.*

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[7] AH: As did al-Haythamī in his *majmā` al-zawā'id*, p. 179, vol. 2 (See **http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-2.jpg**); and al-Mundhirī in his *al-targhīb wal tarhīb* (1/273, no. 1018). The narration is also found in al-Tabarānī's *mu`jam al-saghīr* (no. 508) where he declared the narration to be *sahīh* (see: **http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-3.jpg**; **http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-4.jpg**) as well as his *kitāb al-du`ā* (2/1288)

Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna`ūt also agreed with Shaykh `Abdullāh al-Ghumārī and the previous Hadīth Masters like al-Tabarānī, al-Haythamī and al-Mundhirī that this narration is *sahīh* (see appendix W40.7, p. 939 of The Reliance of the Traveller, edited by Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller)

[8] The recognized authorities in the field of Hadīth and its criticism unanimously regard the Hadīth of the blind man to be a sound Hadīth. Al-Tirmidhī reported it and said that it is *hasan sahīh gharīb*, and he remarked that he didn't know this Hadīth by any other chain of narration (*sanad*).

Ibn Khuzayma reported the Hadīth with the same chain in his Hadīth, and Ahmad reported it in his *al-musnad*, p. 138, vol. 4; and al-Nasā'i in his *`amal al-yawm wal layla*, p. 417; and Ibn Mājah in his *al-sunan*, p. 441, vol. 1; and al-Bukhārī in his *al-tārīkh al-kabīr*, p. 210, vol.6; and al-Tabarānī in his *al-mu`jam al-kabīr*, p.19, vol. 9; and also in his *kitāb al-du`ā'*, p. 1289, vol. 2; and al-Hākim in his *al-mustadrak*, p. 313 and p. 519, vol. 1; he declared it to be a rigorously authentic Hadīth (*sahīh*), and al-Dhahabī affirmed its authenticity [in his annotations on *al-mustadrak*]. Al-Bayhaqī reported the Hadīth in his *dalā'il al-nubūwa*, p. 166, vol. 6, and in his al-*da`wat al-kabīr*.

In spite of al-Tirmidhī's disacknowledgement, there is another chain of this Hadīth, which is what the specialists call mutāba'ah, Shu'bah reported the same Hadīth with the chain (*sanad*) which Hammād ibn Salāma reported from Abū Ja'`ar in al-Tirmidhī's version. `Abdullāh al-Ghumārī mentioned the names of the authorities who reported this Hadīth in his book *al-radd al-muhkam al-matīn `alā kitāb al-qawl al-mubīn,* (Cairo, Maktabat al-Qāhira, 3rd ed., 1986), pp. 144-149, the different sources of the Hadīth, and its alternate chains (*mutāba`ah*) as did Mahmūd Sa'īd Mamdūh in his *raf` al-mināra fī takhrīj ahādith al-tawassul wal ziyāra* (Ammān, Jordan, Dār al- Imām al-Nawawī, 1st ed., 1995), pp.94-95.

Although Ahmad also reports this Hadīth from Shabīb, it is not Shabīb's report from Yūnus ibn Yazīd [which (as Hamdī pretends) is what the experts in narration stipulated as the condition for the correctness of Shabīb's narrations.]

Furthermore, the experts in narration (al-muhaddithūn) are at variance concerning the text of this Hadīth which they narrate from Ahmad [ibn Shabīb].

Ibn al-Sunnī reported the Hadīth in his `amal al-yawm wal layla and al-Hākim reported it with three different chains of narration (sanad) neither of them mentioning the story [of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf and the man who wanted to see `Uthmān].

Al-Hākim reported the Hadīth by way `Awn ibn 'Amāra al-Basrī from Rawh ibn al-Qāsim.

My teacher (Shaykh) Muhammad Nasiruddīn al-Albānī:

"Even though `Awn is weak (da`īf), still his version of the Hadīth (riwāyah) [without the story of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] is preferable to Shabīb's since Rawh's narration agrees with the narrations of Shu'bah and Hamād ibn Salāmah through Abū Ja'f`ar al-Khatmī[without the story of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf]."

The foregoing discussion [9] is misleading and distorted in several ways.

First Point

The story [of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf and the man who wanted to see `Uthmān] was reported by al-Bayhaqī in *dalā 'il al-nubūwa* [10] by way of:

Ya`qūb ibn Sufyān who said that Ahmad ibn Shabīb ibn Sa`īd reported to me that his father reported to him from Rawh ibn al-Qāsim from Abū Ja`faral-Khatamī from Abū Usāmah ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf that a man was going to `Uthmān ibn `Affān and he mentioned the story in its entirety.

[9] Which is a regurgitation of what al-Albānī has said in his *al-tawassul*, p. 88.

[10] AH: Vol. 6, pp. 167-168 – see the following scans: (**http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-5.jpg**; **http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-6.jpg**) for what Shaykh al-Ghumārī referred to above.

Ya`qūb ibn Sufyān is [Abū Yūsuf] al-Fasāwī (d. 177 h.) [11], the Hāfiz [12], the Imām [13], the utterly reliable transmitter (*al-thiqa*) [14] rather, he is better than utterly reliable (*thiqa*).

The chain of narration (*sanad*) of this Hadīth is utterly reliable (*sahīh* [15]) Thus the story [about `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] is quite authentic. Other [specialists in the science of Hadīth and its narrators] also proclaimed the Hadīth to be rigorously authentic (*sahīh*). Hāfiz al-Mundhirī

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[11] Ya`qūb ibn Sufyān is mentioned in Ibn Hajar's reputed and authoritative dictionary of narrators: *taqrīb al-tahdhīb* (Beirut, Dār al-Rashād, 3rd ed.,1991), p.608.

[12] A *Hāfiz* was a scholar of Hadīth who had prodigious powers of memory and had memorized, according to some, at least one hundred thousand Hadīths.

[13] An Imām was a Hadīth scholar (*muhaddith*) whose integrity and mastery in the science was so outstanding and his opinion so apt that other scholars began to depend on him for guidance in the field. It was the Imāms who established who were the weak narrators and who were the strong, and, likewise, it were they who established which version of a Hadīth was correct and which, if any, were incorrect or weak. Once a man became established as an Imām, he was impeachable; nobody's criticism could impair his reputation and authority. This is an established principle in the science of the authentication and criticism of narrators (*`ilm al-jarh wal ta`dīl*)

[14] *Thiqa* refers to a narrator of Hadīth who is qualified both by integrity (*`adāla*) and minute accuracy. The latter term means that the transmitter hears and remembers correctly what is transmitted to him the first time and, thereafter, can recall exactly what he remembered whenever he wishes to narrate; in other words, he gets it right the first time and every time thereafter. Integrity means that the narrator neither lies nor commits major sins (*al-kabā'ir*)

[15] *Sahīh* is a technical term in the science of Hadīth. It refers to a narration which has the following five qualifications:

a) A chain of narration (*sanad*) going back to the Prophet ﷺ.

b) A chain of narration (*sanad*) which is continuous in that every narrator (*rāwi*) heard directly from the person he narrates from. This condition is called *ittisal*.

c) Every narrator (*rāwi*) is considered by the authorities of the science of criticism of narrators (*`ilm al-jarh wal ta`dīl*) to be utterly reliable (*thiqa*: defined above in footnote **11**.)

d) Both the text of the Hadīth and its chain of narrators (*sanad*) must be free of any hidden defect (*`illa*). Hidden defect (*`illa*) is defined as a factor which prejudices the soundness of the Hadīth or its *sanad*. On account of its subtleness, it could only be recognized by a few masters of the art like al-Dāraqutnī, al-Tirmidhī, al-Hākim, and Ibn Rajab, for example.

e) The text of the Hadīth must not contradict any principle established by recurrent Hadīth (*mutawātir*), or clear-cut texts of the Qur`ān (*al-nusus al-qat'iyya*). Neither may any of the narrators contradict those who are more reliable than he either in terms of the text of the narration or in the particulars of the *sanad*. In the case of any of the above the Hadīth will be regarded as irregular (*shādh*), and therefore weak. The recognition of such irregularity requires one to be familiar with the entire corpus of Hadīth, and, as such, the only people qualified to recognize it are the early Imāms.

mentioned it in his *al-targhīb wal tarhīb* [16] and Hāfiz al-Haithamī mentioned it in his *majma` al-zawā'id* [17].

Second Point

Ahmad ibn Shabīb is one of the narrators that al-Bukhārī depended on; al-Bukhāri reported Hadīth from Ahmad ibn Shabīb both in his Sahīh and in his *al-adab al-mufrad.* Abū Hātim al-Rāzī also declared him to be utterly reliable (*thiqa*), and both he and Abū Zur`a wrote down his Hadīth. Ibn `Adī mentioned that the people of Basra [that is, the experts in the science of Hadīth and criticism] considered him to be utterly reliable (*thiqa*) and `Alī al-Madinī wrote down his Hadīth.

Ahmad's father, Shabīb ibn Sa`īd al-Tamīmī al-Habatī al-Basrī is also one of the narrators whom al-Bukhārī depended on in both his Sahīh and his *al-adab al-mufrad.*

Those who considered Shabīb to be *thiqa* include: Abū Zur`a, Abū Hātim, al-Nasā'i, al-Dhuhālī, al-Daraqutnī , and al-Tabarānī. [18]

Abū Hātim related that Shabīb had in his keeping the books of Yūnus ibnYazīd, and he said that Shabīb was reliable (*sālih*) in Hadīth and that there was nothing wrong with him (*lā ba'sa bihi*)[19].

Ibn `Adī said: "*Shabīb had a copy of the book* [20] *of al-Zuhrī. He had in his keeping sound Hadīth which Yūnus related from al-Zuhrī.*"

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[16] p. 606, vol. 2

[17] p. 179, vol. 2

[18] Al-Tabarānī mentioned this in his *al-mu`jam al-saghīr*, p. 184, vol. 1, and in his *al-mu`jam al-kabīr* (p. 17, vol. 9.

[19] Shaykh Mahmūd Sa`īd Mamdūh in *raf` al-mināra*, p. 98, mentioned that Abū Zur`a, Abū Hātim, and al-Nasā'i all said about Shabīb: *lā ba'sa bihī* (There is nothing wrong with him.) Shaykh Mahmūd pointed out: "*That is all that is required in order to authenticate a narrator and render what he narrates authentic (sahīh) and warrant its mention [by al-Bukhāri and Muslim] in the two Sahīh's.*"

[20] Al-Zuhrī. His book was monumental in that it was the first book of Hadīth to be written down. `Umar ibn `Abdul `Azīz, the scholar-prince whom posterity hailed as the Fifth Righteous Caliph of Islām, ordered al-Zuhrī to write down the Hadīth for he feared that the knowledge of Hadīth would disappear were they not written down. Al-Zuhrī's book thus marked the beginning of the second era in the history of the science of Hadīth. The first era was characterized by a conspicuous absence of anything written down. The earliest *muhaddithūn* depended entirely on their prodigious powers of memory and were adverse to writing anything down.

[`Alī] ibn al-Madinī said about Shabīb: "*He was utterly reliable (thiqa). He used to go to Egypt for trade. His book was authentic (sahīh).*" [21]

The foregoing relates to the authentication (*ta`dīl*) of Shabīb. [22]

As you notice there is no stipulation that his narration be from Yūnus ibn Yazīd in order to be authentic (*sahīh*).

Rather, Ibn al-Madinī affirms that his book was authentic, [23] while Ibn `Adī confined himself to commenting about Shabīb's copy of al-Zuhrī's book not intending to intimate anything about the rest of Shabīb's narrations. So what al-Albānī claims [namely, that Shabīb's narrations are authentic on the condition that he narrate from Yūnus ibn Yazīd] is deception and a breach of academic and religious trust.

What I have said [about Shabīb's unconditional reliability] is further corroborated by the fact that [another Hadīth which Shabīb related; namely] the Hadīth about the blind man [who came to the Prophet ﷺ to plead him to pray for him] was declared to be authentic by the Hadīth experts (*huffāz*) although Shabīb did not narrate this Hadīth from Yūnus by way of al-Zuhrī. Rather, he related it from Rawh ibn al-Qāsim.

Furthermore, al-Albānī claims that since some narrators whose Hadīth are mentioned by Ibn al-Sunnī and al-Hākim did not mention the story [about `Uthmān ibn Hunayf], the story is doubtful (*da`īf*). This is another example of al-Albānī's trickery. People who have some knowledge about the principles of the science of Hadīth know that some narrators report a given Hadīth in its entirety, while others may choose to abridge it according to their purpose at hand.

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[21] Mahmūd Sa`īd Mamdūh observed in his book *raf` al-mināra fī takhrīj ahādith al-tawassul wal ziyāra,* p. 100, that al-Albānī in quoting the above statement of `Alī al-Madinī in his *al-tawassul*, p. 86, deliberately omitted the first part of his statement and the most important part of it; namely, that Shabīb was utterly reliable (*thiqa*). Al-Albānī wrote in his al-Tawassul: *"`Alī al-Madinī said: 'He used to go to Egypt on business…."* Nowhere did Albānī mention that `Alī al-Madinī said that Shabīb was utterly reliable (*thiqa*). Given that the entire thrust of al-Albānī's argument is that Shabīb is not reliable, al-Albānī's omission of `Alī al-Madinī's confirmation of Shabīb's reliability is a very serious matter.

[22] Shaykh Mahmūd mentioned in his *raf` al-mināra fī takhrīj ahādith al-tawassul wal ziyāra*, p.98, that al-Albānī is the first person to claim that Shabīb is a weak narrator. Mahmūd Sa'īd mentioned the opinions of nine Imāms in the sciences of Hadīth and criticism (*`ilm al-jarh wal ta`dīl*) that Shabīb is reliable. Those Imāms are: `Alī al-Madinī , Muhammad ibn Yahyā al-Dhuhālī, al-Daraqutnī, al-Tabarānī, Ibn Hibbān, al-Hākim, Abū Zur`a, Abū Hātim, al-Nasā'i .

[23] Mahmūd Sa`īd Mamdūh points out in *raf` al-mināra fī takhrīj ahādith al-tawassul wal ziyāra*, pp. 99-100, that the accuracy of a narrator [which along with integrity (*`adāla*) establishes reliability] is of two kinds: accuracy in respect of his memory, and accuracy in respect of what he has written down (*dabt al-kitāba*). `Alī al-Madinī first declares that Shabīb is utterly reliable (*thiqa*) without stating any condition. Thereafter, he reinforces that by stating that his book is also authentic without making his reliability conditional on being from that book.

Al-Bukhārī, for example, does that routinely in his Sahīh where he often mentions a Hadīth in abridged form while it is given by someone else in complete form.

Moreover, the person who has related the story [about `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] in al-Bayhaqi's report is an extraordinary Imām: Ya`qūb ibn Sufyān. Abū Zur`a al-Dimashqī says about him:

> "Two men from the noblest of mankind came to us; one of them, Ya`qūb ibn Sufyān the most widely-traveled of the two, defies the people of Iraq to produce a single man who can narrate [as well] as he does."

Al-Albānī's declaring the narration of `Awn, which in fact is weak, to be better than the narration of those who narrated the story [of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] is a third aspect of al-Albānī's duplicity and fraud because when al-Hākim related the Hadīth of the blind man in an abridged form by way of `Awn, he remarked:

> Shabīb ibn Sa`īd al-Habatī has given the same Hadīth by way of Rawh ibn al-Qāsim with some additions to the text (matn) and the chain of narrators (isnād). The decision in the matter is Shabīb's since he is utterly reliable (thiqa) and trustworthy (ma'mūn).

What al-Hākim says emphasizes a precept which is universally recognized by the experts in the science of Hadīth (*al-muhaddithūn*) and the principles of the holy law (*usūl al-fiqh*); namely, that additional wording related by a narrator who is utterly reliable (*thiqa*) is acceptable (*maqbūla*), and, furthermore, someone who remembered something is a proof against someone who didn't remember it.

Third Point

Al-Albānī saw al-Hākim's statement but he didn't like it, so he ignored it, and obstinately and dishonestly insisted on the superiority of `Awn's weak narration.

It has been made clear that the story [about `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] is rigorously authentic (*sahih*) in spite of al-Albānī's [and Ibn Taymiyya's] deceitful attempts to discredit it. The story shows that seeking the Prophet's ﷺ intercession after his passing away is permissible since the Companion [24] who reported the Hadīth understood that it was permissible and the understanding of the narrator is significant in the view of the Sharī`ah, for it has its weight in the field of deducing (*istinbāt*) the detailed rules of the Sharī`ah.

We say according to the understanding of the narrator for the sake of argument; otherwise, in actuality, `Uthmān ibn Hunayf's instructing the man to seek the intercession of the Prophet was according to what he had heard from the Prophet as the Hadīth of the blind man [which `Uthmān ibn Hunayf himself related] establishes.

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[24] Companion (*Sahabi*) refers to one who saw the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime and believed in him.

Ibn Abī Khaythama stated in his *tārīkh* [25] [which is a genre of writing which deals with the history and reputation of narrators of Hadīth]:

> Muslim ibn Ibrāhim related to me that Hammād ibn Salama said: Abū Ja`far al-Khatamī related to me from 'Amāra ibn Khuzayma from `Uthmān ibn Hunayf:
>
> A blind man came to the Prophet and said: "I have lost my sight. Pray to Allāh for me."
>
> He answered: "Go and make ablution and then pray two cycles (raqa`atayn) of prayer, and then say: 'O Allāh, I ask You and I approach you through my Prophet Muhammad, The Prophet of Mercy. O Muhammad, I seek your intercession with Allāh that my sight should be restored. O Allāh, accept my intercession for myself and accept the intercession of my Prophet for the restoration of my sight.' If ever you have any need do like that."

The chain of narration (*isnād*) of this Hadīth is rigorously authentic (*sahīh*). The last clause of the Hadīth constitutes the express permission of the Prophet to seek his intercession whenever there occurred any need.

Notwithstanding, Ibn Taymiyya objected on feeble grounds that this last clause comprehended some covert technical defect (*`illa*) [which prejudices the authenticity of the Hadīth or at least its last clause]. I have demonstrated the invalidity of those grounds elsewhere.[26] Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya is characteristically audacious in rejecting Hadīth which do not conform with his purpose at hand even if those Hadīth are rigorously authentic (*sahīh*).

A good example of that is the following case: al-Bukhārī reported in his Sahīh: *"Allāh existed and there was nothing other than Him."* [27]

This Hadīth is in agreement with the [clear-cut] evidence of the Qur`an, the Sunnah, reason, and certain consensus (*al-ijmā` al-mutayaqqan*). However, since it conflicts with his belief in the eternity of the world, he turned to another version of this Hadīth which al-Bukhāri also reported: *"Allāh existed and there was nothing before Him."* And he rejected the first version in favor of the second on the grounds that the second conforms with another Hadīth: *"You are the first; there is nothing before You."* [He held that the implication was that created things always existed along with Allāh.]

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[25] AH: This narration was mentioned by Ibn Taymīyya in his *qā'ida fil tawassul* (p. 106).

[26] `Abdullāh al-Ghumārī mentioned in his book *al-radd al-muhkam al-matīn `alāl kitāb al-mubīn*, p. 141, that in his book *al-qawl al-mubīn fī hukm du`ā' wa-nidā' al-mawtā min al-anbiyā' wal sālihīn*, Ibn Taymiyya pretended that the story of `Uthmān ibn Hunayf and the man to whom he taught the prayer of intercession (*al-tawassul*) was forged (*makdhuba*) because the story, if it were true, requires that `Uthmān ibn `Affān was a tyrant (*zālim*) who denied people their rights and didn't even listen to them. Moreover, Ibn Taymiyya claims that none of the books of the Sunnah contain this story.

[27] AH: See *fath al-bārī* (13/410) of al-Hāfiz ibn Hajar

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar remarked concerning the correct manner of reconciling the apparent contradiction in the above-mentioned Hadīths:

> "In fact the way to reconcile the two versions of the Hadīth is to understand the second in light of the first, and not the other way around. Moreover, there is consensus on the principle that reconciliation of two apparently contradictory versions of a text (*nass*) takes precedence over endorsing one version at the expense of revoking the other."

Actually, Ibn Taymiyya's prejudice blinded him from understanding the two versions of the Hadīth which, in fact, are not mutually contradictory. That is because the version *"Allāh existed and there was nothing before Him."* has the meaning which is contained in His name the First; whereas, the version *"Allāh existed and there was nothing other than Him."* has the meaning contained in His name the One. The proof of this is still another version of the Hadīth with the wording *"Allāh existed before everything."*

Another example of Ibn Taymiyya's audacity in rejecting Hadīth is the case of the Hadīth: *"The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ordered the doors which opened on the mosque from the street to be sealed, but he left `Alī's door [open]."* This Hadīth is rigorously authentic (*sahīh*). Ibn al-Jawzī was mistaken by mentioning it in his collection of forged Hadīths, *al-mawdū`āt*. Hāfiz [Ibn Hajar] corrected him in his *al-qawl al-musaddad.* [28] Ibn Taymiyya because of his well-known bias against `Alī was not content with Ibn al-Jawzī's declaration that the Hadīth was forged, but took the initiative to add from his own bag [of fraud] the pretence that the Hadīth experts (*al-muhaddithūn*) are agreed that the Hadīth is forged. Ibn Taymiyya has rejected so many Hadīth simply because they are irreconcilable with his opinions that it is hard to keep track of the instances. [29]

Fourth Point

In order to conciliate al-Albānī, let us suppose that the story [about `Uthmān ibn Hunayf] is weak, and that the Ibn Abī Khaythama's version of the Hadīth [with the addition: '*Whenever you have any need do like that.*'] is defective (*mu`allal*) as Ibn Taymiyya would have it; still the Hadīth of the blind man is quite enough to prove the permissibility of seeking the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ since the fact that the Prophet ﷺ taught the blind man to seek his intercession on that occasion shows the propriety of seeking it in all circumstances.

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[28] AH: See pp. 10-11 of the A'lam al-Kutub edition

[29] `Abdullāh al-Ghumārī has mentioned in his numerous works a great number of such instances of Ibn Taymiyya's dishonesty. His book *al-radd al-muhkam al-matīn `alāl kitāb al-mubīn* contains a lot of examples. Many other `Ulemā have complained about this trait in Ibn Taymiyya. Among them Taqīyuddīn al-Subkī , Ibn Hajar al-Makkī, Taqīyuddīn al-Husnī, `Arabī al-Tubbānī, Ahmad Zaynī Dahlān, Muhammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī.

Moreover, it is not allowable to refer to such intercession as a heretical departure (*bid`ah*), nor is it allowable to arbitrarily restrict such intercession to the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ.

Indeed, whoever restricts it to his lifetime is really a heretic [30] because he has disqualified a rigorously authentic Hadīth and precluded its implementation, and that is unlawful (*harām*).

Al-Albānī, may Allāh forgive him, is bold to claim conditionality an abrogation simply because a text prejudices his preconceived opinions and persuasion. If the Hadīth of the blind man was a special dispensation for him, the Prophet ﷺ would have made that clear as he made it clear to Abū Burda that the sacrifice of a two year old goat would fulfill his duty; whereas, it would not suffice for others. Furthermore, it is not admissible to suppose that the Prophet ﷺ might have delayed explaining a matter in detail when his followers needed that knowledge at that time.

A Subterfuge and its Preclusion

Suppose somebody says that the reason we have to restrict the application of this Hadīth to the lifetime of the Prophet is that it involves calling (*nidā'*) the Prophet [whereas, it is not possible to call him after his death.] We reply that this objection is to be rejected because there are numerous reports (*mutawatir*) from the Prophet concerning his instruction about what one should recite during the *tashahhud* [31] of prayer, and that contains the greeting of peace (*salām*) for him with mention of him in the vocative form: Peace be upon you, O Prophet! [32] That is the very formula which Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Ibn Zubayr, and Mu`āwiya taught the people from the *minbar* [33]. Thereafter, it became an issue on which there was consensus (*ijmā`)* as Ibn Hazm [34] and Ibn Taymiyya affirmed.

al-Albānī, because he is prone to schism (*ibtidā'*), violated the consensus and insisted on following an opinion reported of Ibn Mas'ud: "Then when he died we said: Peace be on the Prophet (*al-salāmu 'alāl nabiyu*)." Indeed, violating the Hadīth and consensus is the essence of heresy (*ibtidā`*).

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[30] Because such a person in effect declares impermissible something that the Prophet ﷺ has permitted and that precisely is what heresy is all about: changing or opposing the Sharī`ah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

[31] *Tashahhud* refers to certain formulas which are recited when one comes to sit after every two *raqa`ats* of prayer. It is called *tashahhud* because it contains the formula of witnessing (*shahāda*) the uniqueness of the divinity, and the truth of the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ.

[32] '*assalāmu `alayka ayyuhan nabiyyu'*

[33] *Minbar* is a step-like construction on which stands the person who delivers the Friday Exhortation.

[34] AH: See Ibn Hazm's *fasl fīl nihl* (1/89)

Furthermore, there are authentic reports from the Prophet ﷺ which inform us that our deeds are presented to the Prophet [in his blessed grave] as are our supplications for his peace (*al-salām*) and honor (*al-salāh*). There are also authentic reports about angels which travel about the earth in order to convey to the Prophet any greetings of peace and honor that anyone of his people might happen to make for him. Also definitive texts (*tawātur* [35]) and consensus (*ijmā`*) establish that the Prophet is Alive in his grave, and that his blessed body does not decay. After all that, how can anybody dare to claim that it is not allowable to call the Prophet ﷺ in seeking his intercession? After all, is that in any different than calling him in *tashahhud*?

Unfortunately, al-Albānī is perversely obstinate and opinionated, as are the Albānites [that is, his blind, fanatic followers].

So much for my rebuttal of al-Albānī. As for the person called Hamdī al-Salafī, there's no need to refute him separately because he merely echoes al-Albānī.

Another thing which I should establish here is that al-Albānī is not to be depended on in his judgments about Hadīth authenticity, nor their weakness because he routinely employs a variety of tactics to mislead, and he does not disdain to betray his trust in transmitting the opinions of the `Ulemā distorting their words and meanings. Moreover, he has had the impudence to oppose the consensus and to claim the abrogation (*naskh*) of texts without proof. He commits such excesses because of his ignorance of the principles [of the science of *fiqh*] and the rules of inference and deduction (*al-istinbāt).*

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[35] Which here means unambiguous texts of the Qur'ān and numerous Hadīth which, while being from different sources, attest to a common meaning.

He claims he is struggling against heretical innovation (*bid`ah*) by forbidding the practice of intercession, and by forbidding people to use the epithet '*sayyidinā*' when mentioning the name of the Prophet ﷺ, and by forbidding them to recite the Qur'ān for the sake [of the souls] of the deceased. However, the fact of the matter is that by doing that he commits a real heresy (*bid`ah*) by forbidding what Allāh has permitted, and by verbally abusing the Ash`arites [36] and the Sūfīs [37].

In all this he is just like Ibn Taymiyya who denounced all kinds of people; some of them he declared to be unbelievers and others to be heretics; then, he went and committed two of the biggest heresies that one can commit. In the first instance, he maintained the eternity of the

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[36] The Ash`arites (*al-ashā`ira*) is the designation of the proponents of the theological school which evolved to rationally defend Islāmic orthodoxy from deviations which heterodox schools like the school of the Mu`tazila, and the Arabic philosophers, tried to foist off on Islām. The Ash`arites accepted the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as true beyond question and they regarded the authority of the two as supreme. Notwithstanding, they held that what the Qur'ān and the Sunnah taught was agreeable to reason. They employed reason to arrive at a valid understanding of the sacred texts (*nusus*) and to establish certain principles of interpretation and priority. The Ash`arites maintained the absolute transcendence of Allāh since that is what both reason requires and the unequivocal (*muhkamah*) and definitive (*qat`iyya*) texts proclaim.

They ably maintained that Allāh alone is the Necessary Existent. His existence is known to be necessary because this universe, which is a work of exquisite wonder and mind-boggling perfection needs an originator who being the primal cause of all that exists is himself beyond cause. All else is contingent: it may exist, as it may also not exist. Being Necessary, He is beyond all change, without beginning and without end; whereas, everything else has a beginning and is subject to change and annihilation. Moreover, the Necessary Existent is unique in both His being and His attributes. No originated thing shares with him any of his attributes, nor is He qualified by any of the attributes of originated things. Thus he does not possess body, nor is He compounded of parts, nor is he defined by any direction or limit, nor is He contained in time or space. Whatever we imagine Him to be, He is other than that. Neither is He in this world, nor is He outside it; neither is He contiguous with the world, nor is He separate from it. Although He exists, nay His existence alone is necessary, yet we cannot comprehend the nature of His existence.

[37] Sūfīs are those who engage themselves in following the Sharī`ah inwardly so that the effects of that are seen externally, and outwardly so that the effects of it are seen internally. That is the definition of Sufism which was given by Sharīf al-Jurjāni in his *al-ta`rifāt*. It is a discipline whose goal is the purification of the soul and the reformation of the personality so that the Sūfī should live with a true awareness of the presence of Allāh ﷻ neither letting Him find him remiss in what He has charged him with, nor letting Him find him doing what He has forbidden him. As such, Sufism is a legitimate Islāmic science; rather, it is one of the highest sciences, nonetheless it is complimental to and dependent on the other sciences like the science of beliefs (*`aqā'id*), *fiqh*, principles of *fiqh*, commentary of the Qur'ān (*tafsīr*), principles of Hadīth, Arabic grammar, Arabic rhetorical sciences (*al-balāgha*), and so on. If Sufism was plagued by heterodox accretions, that didn't stop true Sufism from being a legitimate and noble science any more than the accretion of spurious lore from the Christians and Jews stopped Qur'ānic commentary from being a legitimate and noble science. Just as Imāms of *tafsīr* purged that science of false or dubious material and established correct principles, the imāms of Sufism purged it of what was illegitimate. `Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī is reported to have said: "*I seek refuge in Allāh from the Pseudo-Sūfīs of my time.*"

world [which means, in other words, that he maintained that the world has no beginning, but always existed along with Allāh], and that is a heresy which constitutes categorical unbelief; we seek refuge in Allāh from that. Then in the second instance he was prejudiced against `Alī ﷺ for which the `Ulemā of his time accused him of hypocrisy. [38] That is because the Prophet told `Alī: *"No one loves you but a believer, and no one hates you but a hypocrite."*

No doubt, Ibn Taymiyya's dislike of `Alī is a punishment which Allāh has given Ibn Taymiyya. Yet al-Albānī insists on calling Ibn Taymiyya 'Shaykh al-Islām' [which is traditionally a title reserved for the greatest scholar of the time]. It amazes me that he should give Ibn Taymiyya such a title when Ibn Taymiyya has un-Islamic beliefs.

I think; rather, I am sure that if Hāfiz Ibn Nāsir [al-Dīn al-Dimashqī] had some idea of Ibn Taymiyya's execrable beliefs, he would never have defended him in his book *al-radd al-wafir* [from the scathing attack of `Alā'uddīn al-Bukhārī [39] who wrote a book called *man qāla ibn taymiyya shaykh al-islām fa-huwa kāfir (*Whoever says Ibn Taymiyya is Shaykh al-Islām is an unbeliever)].

No doubt, when Ibn Nāsir wrote his book, he was deceived by the praises he heard some people making of Ibn Taymiyya. Likewise, al-Alūsī, the son of the celebrated commentator [Mahmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī] wrote the voluminous commentary of the Qur'ān [*rūh al-ma`anī*] would not have written his book *jalāl al-aynayn* if he knew the reality of Ibn Taymiyya's beliefs.

Al-Albānī's outlandish and heterodox opinions, which are the result of his impious resort to free thought, his deceit, his dishonesty in pronouncing Hadīth to be authentic or weak according to what suits his persuasion [rather, than according to the dictates of the facts], his excoriations of the `Ulemā and the illustrious personages of Islām; all that is an affliction from Allāh, yet he doesn't realize it.

Indeed, he is one of those [to whom the Qur'ān referred by its words]: who thinks they are doing good; however, how wrong is what they think.

We ask Allāh to preserve us from what He has afflicted al-Albānī with, and we seek refuge in Him from all evil. All praise is for Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allāh bless Our Master Muhammad and all his noble people.

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[38] AH: See *al-durar al-kāmina* (1/114) of al-Hāfiz ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī

[39] He is Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Bukhārī (d. 841 h/1438 ad., Damascus). He was a theologian (*mutakallim*), and a Hanafī *faqīh*, and an expert in the principles of fiqh. His commentary on Usūl al-Bazdawi is a classic text on Hanafī *usūl*. He was a student of Sa'duddīn al-Taftāzānī. He emigrated from Bukhārā in Transoxiana to India, then to Mecca, then to Damascus where he lived till he died. Ibn Tulūn called him the 'Imām of his times'. See al-'a`lām, p. 47, vol. 7

Epilogue [40]

Intercession is allowed according to our law.
It is a matter by none disputed in all of Muslimdom,
Except those who folly wedded and paid their dowry with insolence.
Their hearts are stone, by Muslims scorned goons of the Wahhābi mob,
They prohibited it and denounced it
Without any reason why.
The case of one `Uthmān ibn Hunayf is a valid precedent;
It's our proof; it's quite conclusive, and it brooks no controversy.
May Allāh guide them to concede the verdict of documentation.

[40] AH: For the poem in the epilogue in the original handwriting of Shaykh `Abdullāh al-Ghumārī *rahimahullāh* see: (**http://www.marifah.net/scans/ghumari-7.jpg**)